

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUANDA 00643 232349Z

63

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 SY-05

SCCT-01 A-01 OPR-02 IO-10 OMB-01 AID-05 /101 W

----- 045578

R 231200Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3599

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS AO

SUBJECT: A MOVEABLE FEAST: MPLA CELEBRATES A BELATED MAY DAY

1. IN A SURPRISE MOVE ON MAY 21, MPLA CALLED AFOR A RALLY AND A GENERAL STRIKE ON MAY 22 TO PROTEST EXPLOITATION OF THE WORKERS AND TO CELEBRATE MAY DAY. THEY PLANNED TO HOLD THE RALLY AND PARADE THAT HAD BEEN SET FOR MAY 1, BUT HAD BEEN CANCELLED BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AS PART OF HIS PLAN TO RESTORE ORDER TO THE CITY DURING THE MOST RECENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE.

2. FNLA AND UNITA DID NOT GO ALONG WITH MPLA'S ACTION AND BOTH MOVEMENTS URGED THEIR SUPPORTERS TO GO TO WORK AS NORMAL. THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR (FNLA) ISSUED A BLAND COMMUNIQUE ASKING THE WORKERS TO BE "PEACEFUL" AND CALLING ON THE POLICE AND ARMY TO MAINTAIN ORDER. NO LEGAL HOLIDAY WAS DECLARED.

3. THE RALLY AND THE STRIKE FIZZLED. ONLY ABOUT 8,000 - 10,000 PEOPLE BOthered TO ATTEND THE RALLY AND LESS THAN HALF OF THESE WENT UP TO THE PALACE TO SHOUT SLOGANS AND PRESENT A PETITION. THE EVENTS WERE ORDERLY AND NO INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED. THE STRIKE CALL MET WITH INDIFFERENCE. SOME FIRMS DECIDED TO CLOSE DOWN BUT

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PAGE 02 LUANDA 00643 232349Z

MANY REMAINED OPEN AND THOSE THAT DID REPORTED NEAR NORMAL

ATTENDANCE FROM WHITES AND BLACKS ALIKE.

4. THIS FIASCO WAS A REPLAY OF ANOTHER SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT STRIKE CALL MPLA ISSUED IN MARCH THAT ALSO WENT LARGEY UNHEEDED. MPLA SUPPORT IS MUCH GREATER THAN THE DISMAL TURN-OUT WOULD INDICATE. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE EVENT WAS NOT PROPERLY PLANNED NOR PROPAGANDIZED. THE FIRST PUBLIC WORD OF THE STRIKE CAME ON THE MORNING OF THE 21ST AND APPARENTLY ONE DAY IS NOT ENOUGH TIME FOR MPLA TO CRANK UP THEIR OTHERWISE IMPRESSIVE URBAN ORGANIZATION TO TURN OUT THE MASSES. IT COULD ALSO INDICATE THE MASSES ARE TIRED OF LOSING TIME FROM WORK, AND THEREFORE PAY, DUE TO VIOLENCE, POLITICAL RALLIES, STRIKES AND GREETING ARRIVING DIGNITARIES.

PORTER

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